



PDM 7

Culture and identity: ethos, environment and curriculum

Aims

- To consider the importance of developing an ethos and environment which affirms children’s cultures and developing sense of personal identity
- To explore ways to ensure that classroom ethos, environment and organisation promote equal opportunities and a sense of belonging
- To discuss the contribution of classroom display to the learning environment
- To explore ways to plan for the development of inclusive curriculum contexts which build on what children know and understand, promote a sense of belonging, and equip children to recognise and resist bias, racism and stereotyping

Overview of a suggested professional development programme

Learning and teaching: assessment for learning

PDM 1

Establishing layered curriculum targets as a context for language development

PDM 6

Day-to-day assessment

Learning and teaching: language development and curriculum access

PDM 2

EAL principles, pedagogy and practice: first language as a tool for learning

PDM 3

Integrated planning for language development and curriculum content

PDM 4

Supportive contexts: scaffolding language and learning

PDM 5

Speaking and listening: guided sessions for language development

Conditions for learning

PDM 7

Culture and identity: ethos, environment and curriculum

Partnerships beyond the classroom

PDM 8

Developing learning partnerships with parents, carers, families and communities



Key messages

- Essential knowledge and understanding from earlier PDMs.
- A school teaches in three ways: by what it teaches, how it teaches and the kind of place it is.
- All children need to feel safe, settled, secure and valued. They need a sense of belonging. Children will not be able to learn effectively until these basic needs are met.
- Schools have statutory general and specific duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which include a specific duty to monitor the impact of all school policies, including curriculum policies, on race equality.
- In order to address the needs of Muslim pupils, 'Islamophobia' (a term used to describe a kind of cultural racism) must be recognised and challenged.
- Each of us takes part in a range of different cultures and communities and we all have a unique and dynamic combination of identities and loyalties.
- Children need to develop a sense of personal identity which is confident – children learn best when they feel good about themselves.
- A key characteristic of successful multi-ethnic schools is the extent to which the curriculum positively reflects children's ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic heritage. Opportunities to do this are afforded by programmes of study across the curriculum.
- Practitioners provide supportive conditions for learning when they:
 - understand and empathise with the social and political factors which impact on children's lives;
 - recognise the central role of relationships in learning and teaching;
 - build confidence and self-esteem;
 - have high expectations;
 - are consistent and fair;
 - model and promote the values, attitudes and behaviour supportive of equality;
 - value diversity and bilingualism;
 - encourage children to be active and collaborative 'co-constructors' of knowledge;
 - learn by listening to children, their parents and communities.

Suggested activities

Review and reflect on progress since the last meeting.

- What have you done?
- What was the impact?
- What have you learned?
- Share curriculum targets.

- Select activities from *Challenging racism, valuing difference: an activities book for primary schools* (1997) to provide 'experiential learning'. Activities in this book can easily be adapted for use with adults to explore:
 - an early experience of discrimination – feeling different or something unfair;
 - personal identity;
 - groups and power.



These activities may unlock quite powerful memories but care should be taken to ensure that participants realise that racial abuse is of a different order altogether from being called 'fatty' or 'scruffy'. A facilitator's guide is available (see resources list).

- These activities could be discussed by staff as speaking and listening activities to adapt for use with children in PSHE and citizenship.

Other activities which could be used include:

- discussing stories, poems or anecdotes about struggles for racial justice, discrimination, etc;
- discussing facts and figures about global development issues which demonstrate inequality (see *If the World were a Village* in resources listed overleaf, for example);
- CPD activity from *Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching*, Creating a learning culture: conditions for learning (DfES 0522/2004 G). Read pages 42–45 and watch *Conditions for learning* video clip 3: Speaking from experience, with reference to bullet 2 on page 48 and handout 3, page 49;
- watching the video *A class divided* (select approximately 30 minutes from the video which is 1 hour long) followed by discussion about the impact of the 'experiment' on the children's achievement;
- discussing historical information about the impact of colonialism, including the legitimisation of racism in order to justify the slave trade.

For further activities which look at the importance of our name as a component in identity see *Challenging racism, valuing difference: an activities book for primary schools* (1997), pages 8 and 9.

Activities which focus on strategies for creating a learning culture

- Watch and discuss *Speaking, Listening, Learning: working with children learning English as an additional language*, DVD sections 1 and 4.
- Discuss and identify ways in which the school promotes a sense of belonging for bilingual children and children from minority ethnic groups through the learning environment.
- Use the learning environment diagnostic tool to audit classroom learning environments as a preparatory task and discuss strengths and areas for development.
- Collectively scrutinise schemes of work and medium-term plans from geography and/or history with reference to the National Curriculum programmes of study in order to identify what is being done and what else could be done to:
 - build on children's previous experience;
 - make learning contexts culturally relevant;
 - make learning contexts especially motivating;

for groups of bilingual learners in the school. Use the checklist for auditing planning to support this activity.

Next steps

- Agree any areas requiring action, and identify steps to be taken and a process for review and evaluation.



Notes

Specific

- Attention to the conditions for learning will have been threading through all other PDMs. However, where school self-evaluation reveals a need to develop this strand further, schools will select from the aims for this module (set out on the front of this flier) and select from and/or adapt the suggested activities which provide a range of alternative starting points.

General

- Arrangements should be made to facilitate participation by part-time staff, EMAG-funded staff and teaching assistants.
- Ensure that key messages are secure and that participants leave with a clear understanding of where they need to focus over the coming half-term.
- Staff who are confident in this area should support other colleagues.
- The activities above are intended as examples. Choose from, and adapt, the suggested activities to fit in with the current priorities for the school as identified in the half-termly whole-school curriculum targets.

Resources

- *Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years*, Professional development materials – particularly the Introductory guide, Unit 3 *Creating an inclusive learning culture* and material to support this PDM on the accompanying CD-ROM
- *Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years*, Creating a learning culture: conditions for learning, professional development materials (DfES 0522-2004 G)
- *Learning for All: Standards for racial equality in schools* (2000) CRE
- Blair, M. and Bourne, J. (1998) *Making the Difference: Teaching and Learning Strategies in Successful Multi-ethnic Schools*, DfES Research report 59
- Learning Design Ltd (1997) *Challenging racism, valuing difference: an activities book for primary schools*
- Learning Design Ltd (1997) *Challenging racism, valuing difference: the facilitators' guide* (www.learningdesign.biz)
- Richardson, R. for Derbyshire Advisory and Inspection Service (2004) *Here, There and Everywhere: belonging, identity and equality in schools*, Trentham Books
- Richardson, R. and Wood, A. (1999) *Inclusive Schools, Inclusive Society: race and identity on the agenda*, Trentham Books
- Smith, D. J. (2004) *If the World were a Village*, A. & C. Black. See also the related website at www.acblack.com/globalvillage
- *A Class Divided*, distributed by Concord Video & Film Council Ltd, 22 Hines Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9BG; tel: 01473 726012

Acknowledgements

Challenging Racism/Valuing Difference: The primary school activities book.

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